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ABSTRACT

Researchers recently have been focusing on the relationships between audience orientations toward specific media and their knowledge about political candidates and issues. The question of media dependency, particularly dependency on television versus newspapers, has been a focal point in the discussion. To test the relationship between media reliance, campaign knowledge, and campaign activity, subjects, 341 voting age Philadelphia residents contacted by telephone using random digit dialing techniques, were interviewed about their media orientations, media use, and campaign interest in the context of the 1986 senate and governor's races in Pennsylvania. A theoretical model based on two models of media dependency was used to analyze the data. The analysis indicated the importance of campaign interest as a predictor of campaign knowledge and activity but finds that media reliance, defined as the individual's identification of a specific medium as their dominant political information source, is unrelated to both campaign knowledge and campaign activity. Findings also showed the superiority of the newspaper as a medium for the transmission of political information. (Six figures and three tables of data are included, and 25 references are appended.) (MS)

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Media Reliance, Political Campaign Knowledge and Activity

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Top Four Paper
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Abstract

William L. Rosenberg and Willian R. Elliott. *Media Reliance, Political Campaign Knowledge and Activity*. Paper presented to the Political Communication Division of the International Communication Association, San Francisco, May 25-29, 1989.

In this study of the 1986 senate and governor's race in Pennsylvania, the authors incorporate the media dependency ideas of DeFleur and Ball-Rokeach (1982) with the uses and dependency model of Rubin and Windahl (1986) to derive a theoretical model for the study of the Pennsylvania campaign. Based on the responses of 341 Philadelphia area subjects, the authors' analysis indicates the importance of campaign interest as a predictor of campaign knowledge and activity but finds that media reliance, defined as the individual's identification of a specific medium as their dominant political information source, is unrelated to both campaign knowledge and campaign activity. The authors also document, as have others, the superiority of the newspaper as a medium for the transmission of political information.

The influence of the mass media on audience member's political knowledge has traditionally been an area of study for political communication researchers. More recently, researchers have been focusing on the relationships between audience orientations toward specific media and their knowledge about political candidates and issues. The question of media dependency, particularly dependency on television versus newspapers, has been a focal point in the discussion.

McLeod and Becker (1974) have suggested that the concept of media orientation may be either an absolute or a relative measure for comparing media. In developing their concept of "media dependency," Becker and Whitney (1980) utilized a variety of measures of television and newspaper exposure, attention to stories on government, and where their subjects got most of their news about government to develop a composite measure of television and newspaper dependency. In most cases, the dependency measures were stronger predictors of knowledge, comprehension and trust but the differences tended to be slight.

McLeod and McDonald (1985) extended the media orientation concept to include specific forms of communication activity--time spent with a medium, exposure to specific content, the degree of reliance on a particular medium, and the level of attention and motivation for use of a medium. In this paper, we investigate the relationships between the concepts of media orientation and media reliance with political campaign knowledge and activity during the 1986 races for U.S. Senator and Governor in Pennsylvania.

Learning and Campaigns

O'Keefe and Atwood (1980) reported that people are differentially interested or motivated to attend to political information during an election campaign. These differences in interest and motivation are the result of the variety of social, psychological and individual political circumstances people experience. O'Keefe and Atwood noted that when evaluating the strength and nature of the public's motives, political communication behaviors are central in explaining communication patterns which ultimately yield various knowledge and campaign activity levels.

Television news and public affairs viewing has been shown to be positively associated with political interest, knowledge and opinion holding (Atkin & Gantz, 1978). However, when subjects were compared in terms of being television news reliant or newspaper reliant (Clarke & Fredin, 1978), newspaper use was more strongly associated with political knowledge and with discriminating perceptions about politics. Apparently, newspapers provide more political information than television and the information is learned better and held longer by readers than by viewers (Miro, 1983). McLeod, Bybee and Durval (1979) found that newspaper reading was a primary factor in generating knowledge about political issues and the candidate' issue positions during a political campaign. They also found that newspaper reading was positively associated with involvement and participation in political campaigns while this was not true for television viewing.

Political campaign interest has been shown to be influenced by television exposure. Patterson (1980), in a study of the 1976 presidential primary campaign, found that campaign interest was influenced more by exposure to television than by exposure to newspapers. His findings suggest that the impact of television may be initially greater than newspapers since the audience may not be able to selectively avoid election content, even politically uninterested viewers. Levy and Windahl (1985) and McDonald and Reese (1987) point to similar evidence of the passivity of television reliant individuals as information gatherers.

Patterson (1980) suggested a difference between newspaper and television dependent individuals. Newspapers have long range and subtle influences on voters as a campaign evolves. Interest appears to grow and, with the increasing interest, news exposure also increases. During the pretelevision era, Patterson speculated that newspapers were able to maintain consistent levels of political campaign interest. The variation in political interest today may be linked to television's format which is oriented toward the most immediate and the most dramatic of political campaign events.

Miro (1983) used media dependency, a composite variable made up of attention to news and media use six or more days per week, as the primary explanatory variable in his time-series study of political knowledge before and one year after the 1980 election in Wisconsin. He found that newspaper dependent individuals, at each of the three time points, were higher in knowledge than television dependent individuals, even after controls for education were introduced.

McDonald and Reese (1987) suggested that the manner in which individuals describe themselves as primarily reliant on one news source over another reveals not only information about their lifestyles and news interests but their actual media behaviors. For instance, television reliant individuals were more likely to watch *PM Magazine* than newspaper reliants while newspaper reliant individuals were more likely to watch the *McNeil-Lehrer Report*, evidence of greater interest in hard news among the newspaper reliant individuals. McLeod and McDonald (1985) determined that groups reliant on either television or newspaper news exhibited different attitudes toward the media and different cognitive, affective and behavioral outcomes associated with media use. In a less clear finding, Faber, Reese and Steeves (1985) found that although individuals identified as reliant on a particular medium did exhibit higher use of that medium, their overall news media use was relatively constant regardless of the media reliant identification.

These findings point consistently to differential knowledge and, in some cases, political behavior associated with heavy newspaper vs. television use. The use of the newspaper as a primary news source makes it possible for individuals to be exposed to

and to remember the facts of a political campaign. Motivation factors, often influenced by the individual's background and cultural characteristics, work with interest and are related to media exposure, knowledge, and behaviors. Much of the work suggested here has already been developed in the writings on media dependency.

Media Dependency Models

DeFleur and Ball-Rokeach (1982) proposed a model of media influence whose central component between society, media and effects is the degree the audience depends on media information. The degree that audiences depend on the media is determined by the number and importance (centrality) of media services and the degree of conflict and change within a social structure. Times of political change, such as during an election campaign, represent time of heightened political conflict and, at least for the involved audience member, times when media supplied information becomes important.

The type of influences on audience members are in the form of cognitive, attitudinal, and behavior change. DeFleur and Ball-Rokeach extended their model (1982, p. 253) to show how this influence process is structured. Parts of that model relevant to this study are presented in Figure 1. In the DeFleur and Ball-Rokeach model, media influences on individuals are determined indirectly by media messages, media structures, social structures, events, and the individual characteristics of audience members as actors. All influences are mediated, for our purposes, through audiences' dependency on media information.

More recently, Ball-Rokeach (1985) has extended the media system dependency model using the individual rather than the audience as the unit of analysis. Here, Ball-Rokeach theorized about the influences on individual media system dependency relations. In this extended model, individual media dependencies are influenced by the social environment, particularly in terms of what she labels as the degree of ambiguity and the degree of threat, media system activity, the individual's interpersonal network system, and individual characteristics including the individual's structural location and

personal goals. The model thus suggested the manner by which individuals develop media dependencies that can, as in the original model, have cognitive, attitudinal, and behavioral effects.

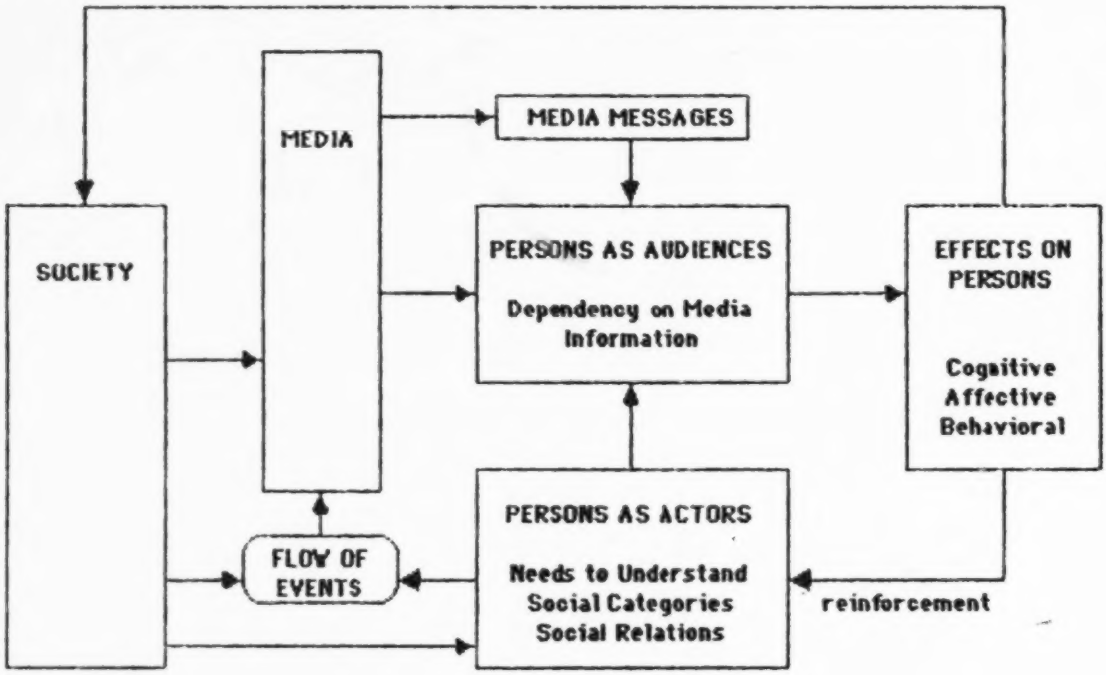

FIGURE 1

DEPENDENCY MODEL

In an even further extension of the model, Rubin and Windahl (1986) have attempted to integrate the dependency model with the uses and gratifications approach. Rubin and Windahl made explicit a new integrated model which focused on the individual as the unit of analysis. In this model, the tripartite relationships between societal system, mass media system, and audience was extended to include mass media use, the use of functional alternatives, and the effects or consequences of this use.

Audience characteristics include psychological traits, social categories, and social relations. In addition, the individual characteristics of needs, interests, and motives also exert an influence. The portion of their model relating individual audience member characteristics through media use to effects and consequences is presented in Figure 2.

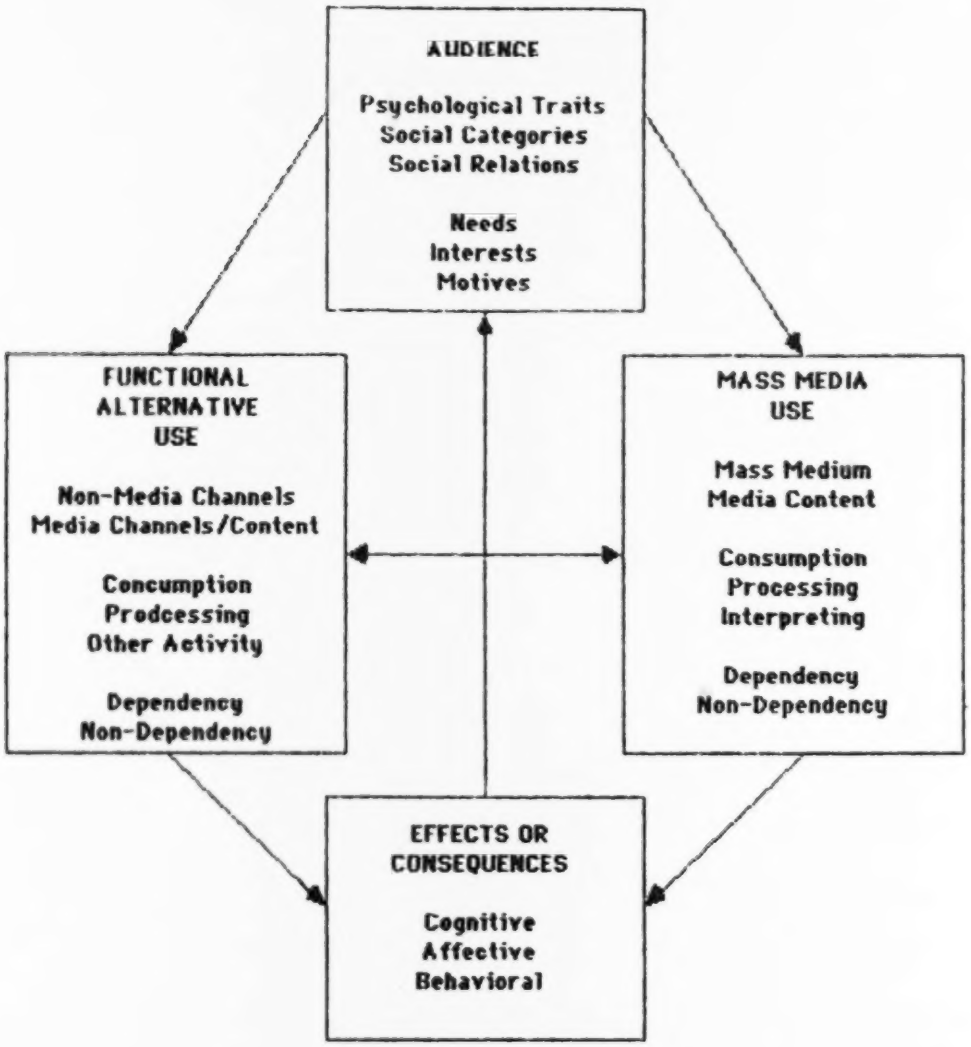

FIGURE 2

USES AND DEPENDENCY MODEL

Rubin and Windahl (1986) provided a definition of "media dependency" as a relationship between an individual and the media such that information contained in the media is necessary for the satisfaction of individual goals and desires. This dependency, they suggested, is the result of individual characteristics and the social environment. Dependency upon a medium or upon media in general can be heightened in times of conflict, stress, and ambiguity.

Audience members in this model develop needs, interests, and motives as a result of their unique psychological makeup, their social position and their social relationships. These needs, interests, and motives can result in mass media or alternative media use and, through this consumption, processing, and interpretation a dependency on the media, on a medium, or on an alternative can result. The result of such dependency, filtered through these other mechanisms, determines cognitive, affective and behavioral outcomes for the audience members.

McLeod and McDonald (1985) have looked at the media dependency model and found several problems. Perhaps the most important of these problems results from confusion over the term "dependency." They noted that it is sometimes used to signify system level measures and concepts, sometimes as a individual characteristic. To overcome this definitional problem, they suggested that the term "media orientations" be used in place of "media dependency." This newer term, they argued, would subsume media exposure, media reliance, media attention, and motivations for media use.

McLeod and McDonald used two measures of gratifications sought from the media, surveillance and communication utility. These variables, which appear to measure the degree to which individuals use the mass media for keeping track of what is going on in the political system (surveillance) and for collecting information that can be used in discussions with friends and in interpersonal relationships (social contact) are close to the motivational audience characteristics suggested by Rubin and Windahl (1986) and the "needs to understand" concept presented in DeFleur and Ball-Rokeach (1982). Their measure of media reliance for political information consisted of a rank ordering of various mass and interpersonal media. Their analysis looked only at newspaper and television reliant individuals.

Chaffee and Schleuder (1986) recently separated measures of media attention and media exposure to determine what, if any, influence media attention had on political knowledge in addition to any influence from exposure. Their findings, quite clearly, pointed to an independent influence on political knowledge resulting from media attention. This was particularly true for attention to television news which had the

strongest relationship to party issue knowledge; stronger than television exposure, stronger than newspaper exposure, and stronger than attention to newspapers.

Adopting yet another approach, Gaziano (1988) classified subjects according to the degree of loss they would feel if deprived of their newspaper/television for some time. Those responding that they "would feel lost" were classified as dependent. Approximately 9% of her sample was highly dependent on both media. Based on her analysis, dependence and use tap different elements of the communication process.

We have elected to combine the models and concepts proposed in these various studies into the one presented in Figure 3. System level variables are omitted from our model and our focus is on the individual.

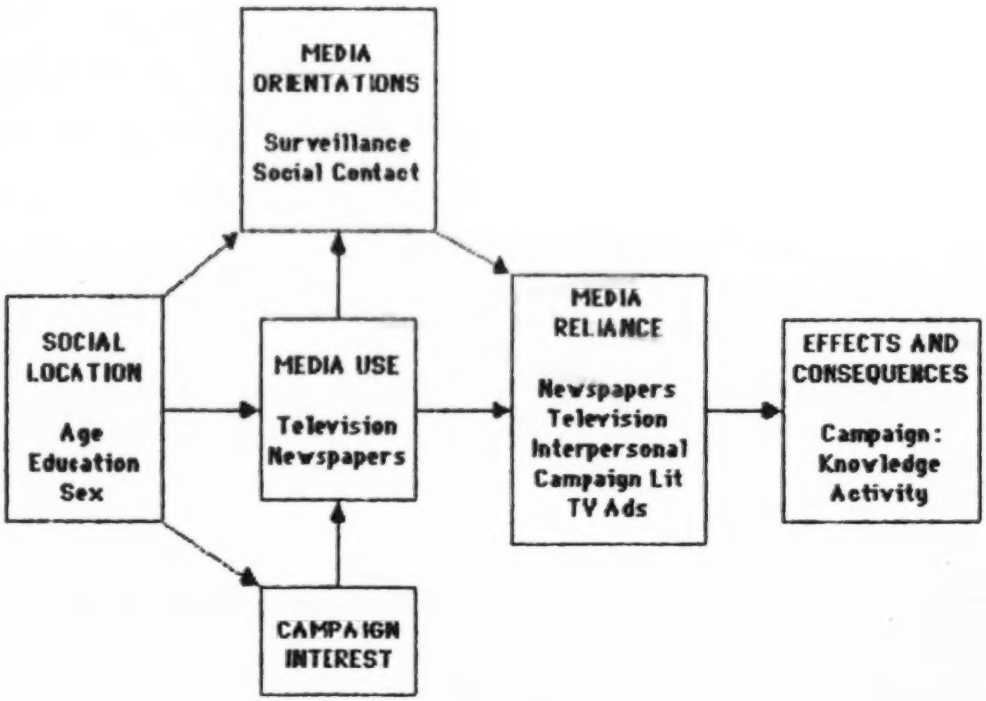

FIGURE 3

MEDIA RELIANCE MODEL

The model suggested in Figure 3 differs slightly from the other models used in its development. Part of that difference occurs because of the direction of influence

indicated in this model from media use to media orientations rather than the reverse as suggested by Rubin and Windahl (1986) and by DeFleur and Ball-Rokeach (1982). We have reversed the order because of recent findings suggesting that gratification type motives for media use often reflect rationalizations for rather than determinants of media use (Lichtenstein & Rosenfeld, 1983; Lichtenstein & Rosenfeld, 1984; Elliott & Rosenberg, 1987).

The model does suggest that much media use, media orientations, and topic interests (in this case, campaign interest) are the result of socio-cultural factors measured in our case by age, education, and gender. There is a long history of research marking media use differences based on demographic variables. Similarly, research on political interest has shown consistent age, education, and gender differences.

Our components of media orientation include two concepts that are frequently used in the political communication literature (surveillance and social contact) and one newly suggested measure, news patterning, which attempts to measure audience members' feelings that the news provides a good summary of what is happening in politics. Patterning has been shown to be related to media use (McLeod, Kosicki, Amor, Allen, & Philips, 1986).

There is a danger, however, in extending a theoretical model based on one level of analysis (the system level model of DeFleur and Ball-Rokeach, 1982) to a lower level based on the individual as the unit of analysis. What we have labeled as "media reliance" refers to the individual's feeling of dependency on a particular medium of communication, usually related to a specific subject area. That type of dependency may well differ from the system level dependency of DeFleur and Ball-Rokeach and be subject to somewhat different influences. Our model in Figure 3 diagrams a model where media reliance (or "medium" reliance) has a singular influence on our cognitive and behavioral dependent measures. It may be that media reliance shares an influence on campaign knowledge and activity with other variables. Hopefully, the analysis we propose will clarify some of this ambiguity.

To test our proposed model, we have conducted a series of analyses relating media

reliance to media orientations, media use, and to campaign interest. Although campaign interest is not predicted to have a direct relationship with media reliance, the possibility of such a linkage was tested. We have used analysis of covariance procedures and multiple classification presentation techniques to show the relationships while controlling for the social location variables of age, education and gender.

Finally, we will test the relationship between media reliance, campaign knowledge and campaign activity. Here we will use analysis of covariance with hierarchical entry to test the relationship between media reliance and the relationships between campaign knowledge and campaign activity with social location, media orientations, media use, and campaign interest after the reliance relationship is tested. While the varieties of levels of measurement in our data make path analysis impractical (Asher, 1983), we will attempt to apply the logic of path analysis to our model.

METHOD

The Sample

A sample of voting age Philadelphia residents was contacted by telephone using random digit dialing techniques. Interviews were conducted Monday through Thursday evenings the week prior to the November 4, 1986, Pennsylvania election. The final sample consisted of 341 subjects. The sample was made up of 55.4% women, 37.2% men, and 7.3% missing or refusals. The largest income category, 17.6% of the sample, had annual household incomes between $20,000 and $30,000. Our subjects' average age was 38.9 years and the majority, 48.7%, had some schooling beyond high school. The sample had 48.4% registered Democrats, 19.9% registered Republicans, and 7.3% classified themselves as independents.

The Variables

Social Location Measures. We used three measures of social location (sex, age, education) as controls in our model. Subjects were asked their age and the highest level

of schooling they had completed. Schooling completed included less than a high school degree, high school graduate or technical school, some college, college graduate, and graduate school.

Media Orientations, Media Use, and Campaign Interest. Two media orientation concepts (surveillance gratifications, social contact gratifications) made up our media orientation variables. For the surveillance and social contact gratification measures, each subject indicated if the gratification statements were a lot like them (1), a little like them (2), or not at all like them (3).

Surveillance, defined as the use of the mass media by individuals for help in making decisions (McDonald & Glynn, 1984), included the following two statements:

1. I read the newspaper and watch television to get to know the quality of the candidates (McLeod & McDonald, 1985).
2. I read the newspaper and watch television to determine what issues are important in this campaign (modified from McLeod & McDonald, 1985).

Failure of these two items to reach an acceptable level of internal reliability of .80 as suggested by Carmines and Zeller (1979) (Cronbach's alpha = .64) made it necessary for us to treat them as separate variables in this analysis.

Our social contact gratification concept, defined as the discussion of media information and the incorporation of that information into daily life (McDonald & Glynn, 1984) consisted of the following two questions:

1. I read the newspaper and watch television to gather information I can use in political arguments (modified from Elliott & Rosenberg, 1987).
2. I read the newspaper and watch television to feel I'm involved in the campaign (Elliott & Rosenberg, 1987).

Again, low internal reliability (Cronbach's alpha = .43) eliminated the formation of

the two items into a single scale.

Our measures of media exposure were developed by asking our subjects to give us estimates of the actual time they spent *yesterday* reading the newspapers. Of the 34% of the subjects who said they had read the newspaper yesterday, the average time spent reading was 39.6 minutes. Subjects were also asked about their television viewing time *yesterday*. For the 65.1% of the sample who reported watching television yesterday, the average viewing time was just under three hours (179 minutes). The average news viewing time for the 135 news viewers was 58.7 minutes.

Campaign interest was indexed according to the subjects' response to the question "how would you describe your interest in this campaign? Would you say you are extremely interested (4), somewhat interested (3), somewhat uninterested (2), or extremely uninterested (1)?"

Media reliance. To determine which source each of our subjects depended upon most for campaign information, they were read the following:

> "I am now going to read you a list of possible sources of information about this campaign. Tell me which single source you have relied on **most** for your campaign information. Have you relied most on family and friends, TV news, newspaper news, co-workers, candidates' campaign literature, or television campaign advertisements?"

Interpersonal sources (family and friends, co-workers) were the primary source for 16.4% of the sample. Newspaper news was mentioned by 21.4%, television news by 20.2%, television ads by 12.9%, and campaign literature by 7.0%. An additional 8.5%, in spite of the request for a single source, named multiple sources. Magazines or radio were volunteered as the choice for .9%, 3.2% indicated they could not make a choice, and 9.4% of the sample did not answer the question.

Campaign knowledge. Knowledge of the campaign issues measured by summing the subjects' correct identifications of each candidate for governor's stand on a state law

making abortion illegal (Republican Scranton was against, Democrat Casey was for) and each candidate for the senate's stand on ending support for the development of the strategic defense initiative (Democrat Edgar was against, Republican Spector was for). Only 4.7% of our respondents correctly identified the issue positions of all four and 34.6% failed to get even one correct. Total campaign knowledge was the sum of candidate and issue knowledge.

Campaign Activity. Campaign activity was measured by summing each subject's positive responses to six activity questions involving: wearing a button or displaying a campaign poster; attending "any rallies, speeches, or parties" for the candidates; making a campaign contribution; working on a campaign staff; seeing either the debate between the candidates for governor or for senator; and planning to vote.

The Analysis

The variety of measurement levels represented in our data presented us with unusual problems for data analysis. Since we have proposed in Figure 3 what is basically a path model, the most straightforward way to analyze such a model would be to conduct a path analysis based on that model. Path analysis, however, assumes that the variables used are measured at least at the interval level. Our variables include two at the nominal level (sex, media reliance), one at the ordinal level (education), several someplace between ordinal and interval (campaign interest, the various media orientation variables), and a few at the ratio level (campaign activity, campaign knowledge, age, television news time, newspaper reading time).

Part of the analytical problem can be overcome by using analysis of covariance techniques (Wildt & Ahtola, 1978) to control the influence of the social location variables (sex, education, age) on the relationships of interest between media reliance and the other variable sets (media orientations, media use, and campaign interest). A still more complicated model tests the relationships between media reliance and the effects or consequence variables (campaign knowledge and activity) using analysis of covariance

techniques to separate the influence of media reliance from the influence of social location, campaign interest, and media orientations.

RESULTS

The analysis was conducted in three stages. In Table 1 the results of the analysis of covariance on the political interest, television news time, and newspaper reading time are presented. The part of the model being analyzed at this point appears below in Figure 4.

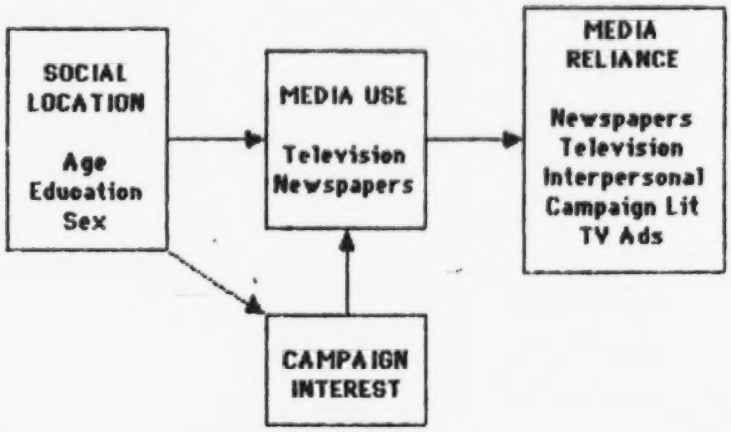

FIGURE 4

SOCIAL LOCATORS, CAMPAIGN INTEREST, MEDIA USE AND MEDIA RELIANCE

Three separate models were run to analyze the model presented in Figure 4. In the first run, we looked at the relationships between social location variables, media reliance, and campaign interest as the dependent variable. In the next two runs, we looked at media use as measured by television news viewing time and newspaper reading time. For each of these analyses, campaign interest was entered as an independent factor in the equation. The results are presented in Table 1.

INSERT TABLE 1 HERE

There are two types of entries in Table 1, mean scores and percentage of variation accounted by individual measures and by the entire model. For the factors used, each response category is represented by a mean score and the overall variable by a percentage of variation explained score. Analysis of the significant (variation explained) elements will help to understand and to evaluate the model.

Campaign interest is virtually unrelated to either gender or media reliance. The insignificant percentages of variance accounted for by each of these variables demonstrates their minor relationship to interest. The lack of a relationship between campaign interest and media reliance supports the model as presented. The one variable that is significantly related to political interest is the covariate of age with accounts for 6.25% of the variation in the model. Age is positively correlated with interest in the campaign. Based on the findings displayed in Table 1, the paths leading to and from campaign interest in Figure 4 will remain as presented.

The linkages between social location, campaign interest, media reliance, and media use are also presented in Table 1. Here, as suggested in Figure 4, linkages exist between media reliance and both television news viewing and newspaper reading. For television news viewing, as would be expected, television news reliant individuals are the heaviest television news watchers averaging over 46 minutes. Close behind them in television news viewing (over 35 minutes) are those subjects who indicated to us that they relied on television advertisements for campaign information. The least likely individuals to rely on television news are the interpersonal reliant subjects (over 1 minutes), campaign literature reliant individuals (15 minutes) and newspaper reliant subjects (almost 20 minutes).

The pattern is somewhat reversed for newspaper reading time. Here the newspaper reliant people spend the greatest amount of time reading (over 23 minutes) while the television news reliant read least (over 4 minutes). Interpersonal reliant subjects, as with television news, spend little time with newspapers, averaging just over 7 minutes. Between the low and high newspaper readers are those who rely on campaign literature (nearly 13 minutes) and those who rely on television ads (nearly 16 minutes).

Interestingly, and not as predicted by the model, the linkage between campaign interest and media use is not supported by our findings, neither for television news viewing time nor for newspaper reading time. Given the frequency in previous studies of finding an interest to media use linkage, this poses something of a problem in terms of analysis and expectations. Part of the problem might well be explained by the general lack of interest in this particular campaign. Of the entire sample of 341 subjects, only 7% indicated they were extremely interested in the campaign. A lukewarm "somewhat interested" was the response given by 42.5% of the subjects, while 28.2% indicated they were "somewhat uninterested" and an additional 14.7% were "extremely uninterested." Hopefully, this finding does not signal the direction of political campaigns to come, even when the campaign is confined to the state level.

The influence of our social locator variables was mixed but present in both cases. Age had a significant relationship with the viewing of television news while education showed a positive relationship with newspaper reading time.

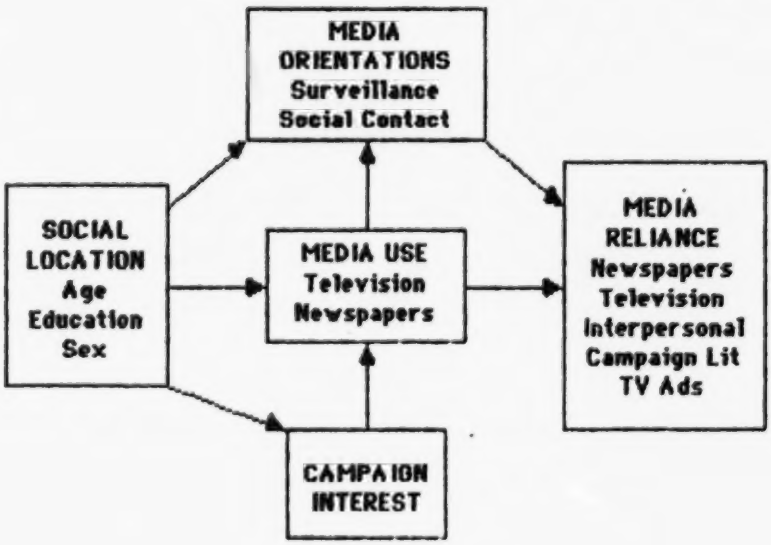

FIGURE 5

SOCIAL LOCATORS, CAMPAIGN INTEREST, MEDIA USE, MEDIA RELIANCE AND MEDIA ORIENTATIONS

In Figure 5 we present the model analyzed in Table 2. For this model the analysis has been extended to investigate the relationships between social locators, campaign interest, media use, media reliance and media orientations.

Based on the model, we expected to find evidence of significant relationships between our social location groups of variables, our media use variables, and media reliance with the surveillance and social contact media orientation measures. No path from campaign interest to these variables was proposed.

The findings are presented in Table 2. They present an interesting pattern. First, none of the relationships predicted is significant for the surveillance media orientations. Straight down the line, the percentage of variation explained is small and statistically insignificant.

INSERT TABLE 2 HERE

The pattern is more as expected for the social contact measures. Here, the idea that media information can be gathered for use in political arguments (INFORM) is significantly related to media reliance (4.05%), campaign interest (3.32%), and newspaper reading time (2.21%). The entire model accounts for 11.69 % of the variation.

Among the media reliant categories, newspaper reliant individuals are the most likely to use the media to gather information for use in political arguments (mean = 1.78, low scores indicate high likelihood of the behavior) while individuals relying on television ads are the least likely (mean = 2.27). Political interest shows a straightforward relationship with this variable with scores falling in each interest category from a high of 2.32 among the extremely uninterested to a low of 1.78 for the extremely interested.

None of the social location variables or television news time are significantly linked to this variable.

The use of newspapers and television to "feel involved in important events" (INVOLVED) is not linked, as predicted, with media reliance but it is linked (4.09% variation accounted for) to campaign interest. Newspaper reading is also related to this

variable (2.04%). One social locator variable, age (2.06%), also is tied to using the media to feel involved in important events.

Table 3 presents the analysis of the total model (see Figure 3, p. 8). Here we are primarily concerned about the relationships between each of our independent variables and our two consequence or effect variables, campaign knowledge and campaign activity. These two variables stand as the last element in the media dependency model chain. It is on these relationships that the most important influence of media reliance should appear.

INSERT TABLE 3 HERE

Both models (campaign knowledge, campaign activity) predict the dependent measures very well. The total variation explained for campaign knowledge is 27.34%, the highest of any of the analyses run. The factors influencing campaign knowledge include gender where men (mean = 2.71) scored more highly on our campaign knowledge measure than women (mean = 1.88). Interest was strongly related to knowledge, with mean scores running from a low for the extremely uninterested group of 1.63 to a high of 3.39 among the extremely interested. Among the covariates, age (1.93%) and education (1.66%) marked the importance of social locator variables on campaign knowledge.

Newspaper reading time was strongly related to campaign knowledge (5.10% of variation accounted for) while the corresponding figure for television news viewing was only 1.13%. Finally, one of the media orientation variables, the use of the media to determine the campaign issues (DETER) explained a significant percentage of the variation (2.28%).

Unfortunately for our model, what didn't happen was a strong relationship between media reliance and campaign knowledge. By our data, it appears that the subject's feeling of reliance on a specific medium does not translate into knowledge during a campaign period.

For campaign activity the model is even simpler. Here only two variables are related to our activity measure, campaign interest and age. Campaign interest by itself explains

19.81% of the variation. Here the numbers of the different interest levels are striking. The mean score on campaign activity for the extremely uninterested is .61. For the somewhat uninterested, it is .87. It jumps to 1.36 for the somewhat interested and to 2.39 for the extremely interested. Interest in state wide campaigns may be low but it appears that the interested are also very active. Age is positively related to campaign activity and accounts for an additional 2.74% of the variation explained.

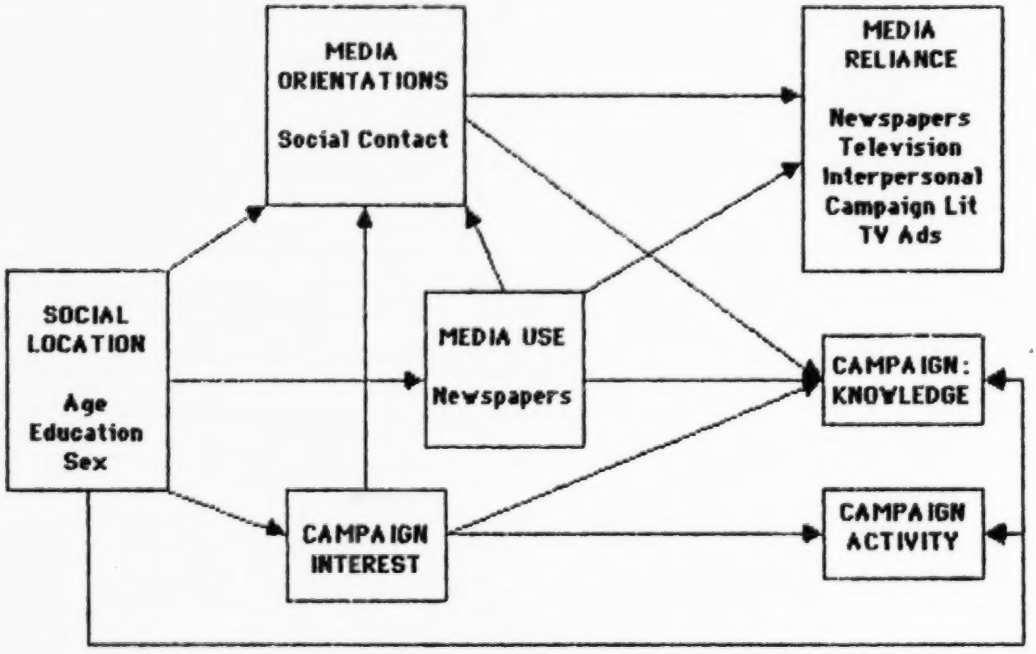

FIGURE 6

REVISED MEDIA RELIANCE MODEL

We have attempted to place our findings in some perspective by presenting a revised media reliance model in Figure 6. In this model we have eliminated those relationships not supported by our findings and added those not originally postulated but which the data suggest may exist. On the basis of the revised model, several and interesting observations are warranted.

Perhaps the most important discovery we have made, at least in terms of our original formulation, is the lack of linkages between our measure of media reliance

and campaign knowledge and campaign activity. The media reliance measure, as it appears on the basis of our analysis, stands as a concept with direct linkages to media use and media orientations and indirect linkages to campaign interest (through media orientations).

A second interesting finding is the lack of a linkage between campaign interest and media use. This unexpected finding may be peculiar to state wide elections as opposed to national elections. However, the importance of campaign interest was extremely strong in terms of predicting campaign knowledge and particularly in terms of campaign activity.

Newspaper reading but not television news viewing emerged as an important model component. With direct linkages to media orientations, media reliance, and to campaign knowledge it stands as a central element in the model although its linkage to campaign activity was missing. It might be that in this campaign there was so little activity that little, other than interest, could have an impact.

CONCLUSION

Overall, we think our analysis has suggested a more complex but more interesting model of media reliance. Earlier models, designed for a different level of analysis or proposed but not tested, suggested that either their idea of media dependency needs to be rethought or that ours concept differs fundamentally from theirs. For us, media reliance emerges as a variable dependent upon media use but not influential on either knowledge or activity, two central components of earlier proposals.

This may be because of several factors. The first is that the concept is unrelated to the knowledge and activity variables as we measured them. It might be suggested that media reliance be placed earlier in the model as a predictor of media orientations rather than the result of such orientations. A second possibility is that our operationalization of media reliance, a verbal response to a question forcing our subjects to select one of several possibilities as the most important campaign

information source, forces an unnatural limitation on the reliance concept. There is nothing we can think of that would limit reliance to a single medium. It seems possible, even likely, that many people would be reliant on newspapers, television news, and magazines. They might be most reliant on the newspaper but that does not diminish the importance of their joint reliance on other media. Future attempts to model the reliance model might operationalize reliance by allowing multiple reliances. It would be a relatively easy task.

We think we have made significant strides in moving toward models that will allow us to better understand the role of the mass media as elements in the political process. Obviously, at least from our study, is the implication that political interest stands at the center of a efficiently operating democracy. The politically interested were more knowledgeable and more active in the campaign. The lack of a linkage between the media and interest might suggest that the role of the mass media as activator is being replaced with more dysfunctional aspects, with exposure substituting for both knowledge and activity. Somehow, the media need to work to reactivate this level of interest.

Finally, we have again documented the importance and dominance of the newspaper as the medium for political communication. Television news failed to appear as an important element in any of our analyses. Unless television becomes more than an entertainment medium, and that seems unlikely, reliance on television news will not serve the political process well. Assuming that an informed and interested electorate is necessary in any system based on self government, television may be leading us to being neither informed nor interested. The agenda television may be setting is an agenda of inactivity and limited knowledge, an agenda of the sound bite and photo opportunity session.

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Table 1

MCA Mean Scores and Variation Accounted For
Campaign Interest and Media Use by
Gender and Media Reliance (Campaign Interest)
Controlling for Age and Education

Independent Variables	Political Interest	Television News Time	Newspaper Reading Time
Grand Mean	2.46	26.78	13.21
Factors			
Gender			
Female	2.45	28.53	10.62
Male	2.47	24.27	16.93
% Variation	0.00%	0.20%	1.12%
Media Reliance			
Interpersonal	2.30	11.53	7.04
Newspaper	2.62	19.86	23.22
Television News	2.45	46.43	4.64
Television Ads	2.36	35.55	15.88
Campaign Literature	2.52	15.00	12.86
% Variation	2.12%	8.01%[c]	5.61%[b]
Campaign Interest			
Extremely Uninterested		12.66	12.50
Somewhat Uninterested		20.85	12.62
Somewhat Interested		31.70	12.41
Extremely Interested		46.67	21.95
% Variation		3.27%	0.48%
Covariates (% Variation)			
Age	6.25%[c]	1.85%[a]	1.20%
Education	.00%	0.00%	2.76%[b]
Multiple R^2 (%)	8.38%[b]	13.42%[c]	11.16%[b]
(N)	(249)	(239)	(239)

[a] $p \leq .05$

[b] $p \leq .01$

[c] $p \leq .001$

Table 2

MCA Mean Scores and Variation Accounted For Surveillance and Social Contact Orientations[1] by Gender, Media Reliance, and Campaign Interest Covarying for Age, Education, TV News Time, and Newspaper Reading Time

	Social Contact		Surveillance	
Independent Variables	INFORM	INVOLVED	QUALITY	DETER
Grand Mean	2.01	2.27	1.79	1.69
Factors				
Gender				
Female	2.08	2.21	1.82	1.69
Male	1.91	2.36	1.75	1.71
% Variation	1.15%	0.92%	0.22%	0.07%
Media Reliance				
Interpersonal	2.04	2.25	1.94	1.85
Newspaper	1.78	2.37	1.73	1.64
Television News	2.12	2.11	1.70	1.53
Television Ads	2.27	2.35	1.85	1.77
Campaign Literature	1.91	2.28	1.77	1.77
% Variation	4.05%[a]	1.25%	1.30%	2.53%
Campaign Interest				
Extremely Uninterested	2.32	2.52	2.03	1.74
Somewhat Uninterested	2.10	2.41	1.87	1.82
Somewhat Interested	1.90	2.11	1.69	1.58
Extremely Interested	1.78	2.23	1.61	1.80
% Variation	3.32%[a]	4.09%[a]	2.38%	1.57%
Covariates (% of Variation)				
Age	0.43%	2.06%[a]	0.50%	0.40%
Education	0.07%	0.66%	0.04%	0.46%
TV News Time	0.46%	0.05%	0.28%	0.26%
Newspaper Reading Time	2.21%[a]	2.04%[a]	1.62%	0.05%
Multiple R^2 (%)	11.69%[b]	11.07%[b]	6.34%	5.33%
(N)	(236)	(236)	(236)	(236)

[a] $p \leq .05$

[b] $p \leq .01$

[c] $p \leq .001$

1 INFORM: "I read the newspaper and watch television to gather information I can use in political arguments." INVOLVED: "I read the newspaper and watch television to feel I'm involved in the campaign." QUALITY: I read the newspapers and watch television to get to know the quality of the candidates." DETER: I read the newspaper and watch television to determine what issues are important in this campaign." 1="a lot like me," 2="a little like me," 3="not at all like me."

Table 3

MCA Mean Scores and Variation Accounted For Campaign Knowledge and Campaign Activity by Gender, Media Reliance, and Campaign Interest Covarying for Age, Education, TV News Time, Newspaper Reading Time, Surveillance and Social Contact Orientations[1]

Independent Variables	Campaign Knowledge	Campaign Activity
Grand Mean	2.22	1.18
Factors		
Gender		
Female	1.88	1.14
Male	2.71	1.24
% Variation	5.89%[c]	0.29%
Media Reliance		
Interpersonal	1.86	1.19
Newspaper	2.75	1.36
Television News	2.05	1.07
Television Ads	2.03	1.00
Campaign Literature	2.14	1.23
% Variation	2.27%	1.67%
Campaign Interest		
Extremely Uninterested	1.63	.61
Somewhat Uninterested	1.66	.87
Somewhat Interested	2.58	1.36
Extremely Interested	3.39	2.39
% Variation	9.51%[c]	19.81%[c]
Covariates (% of Variation)		
Age	1.93%[a]	2.74%[b]
Education	1.66%[a]	0.00%
TV News Time	1.13%	0.12%
Newspaper Reading Time	5.10%[c]	0.18%
INFORM	0.05%	0.00%
INVOLVE	0.00%	1.28%
QUALITY	0.01%	0.10%
DETER	2.26%[b]	0.06%
Multiple R^2 (%)	27.34%[c]	26.27%[c]
(N)	(233)	(236)

[a] $p \leq .05$

[b] $p \leq .01$

[c] $p \leq .001$

1 INFORM: "I read the newspaper and watch television to gather information I can use in political arguments." INVOLVED: "I read the newspaper and watch television to feel I'm involved in the campaign." QUALITY: I read the newspapers and watch television to get to know the quality of the candidates." DETER: I read the newspaper and watch television to determine what issues are important in this campaign." 1="a lot like me," 2="a little like me," 3="not at all like me."